



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

the leaders of the church classes to realize the possibilities of the work which could be done for the 700 students enrolled in their classes if the courses were co-ordinated and organized. He prepared the way for the Religious Education Committee of the Interdenominational Board to make constructive suggestions to the churches regarding this work. He stimulated more interest in the Affiliated Schools of Religion. He was especially stimulating to the Faculty. He was sane and constructive and we feel that his visit was extremely helpful. Incidentally it may be remarked that Professor Kent addressed a class in philosophy, the Freshman Convocation, the joint meeting of the Town and Gown, the student church class leaders, the Association Cabinet, the faculty, church classes, the Vespers and a union church service.

DENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT STATE UNIVERSITIES

O. D. FOSTER

That the under-graduate subjects in religious education afford a natural basis for denominational cooperation, has become self-evident to the educator in this field. Yet, with all of the advancement made in this direction and with the numerous examples of its actual working, there are many not acquainted with the field who do not recognize that such can even be possible. The many instances of cooperation in denominational education are not seen and the fact is not advertised.

In various fields many types of subjects are being taught cooperatively with scarcely a thought about it. For example, the citizens of the commonwealth hold divers views relative to methods of instruction and content of courses in commerce, law and medicine, yet they cooperate in giving courses, which in the judgment of their official representatives, will produce the best results for all concerned.

The public is greatly divided on industrial and political questions, but this does not preclude the possibility, or even practicability of teaching economics and politics to classes whose members entertain every variety of opinion on these subjects. The various theories and points of view are presented and each

must survive or perish in accordance with its own inherent worth.

People have confidence that from the interchange of ideas will issue genuine convictions based upon intelligent study of fact; that is to say, they believe that truth will not suffer in the study. They are convinced that the different views held by members of the class at the conclusion of the course, will be no longer mere opinions, but convictions held because other views did not seem tenable. No one expects the professor, who may be a Democrat, to make Democrats of all of his students, nor one who may be a Republican, to deliver his whole group for the Republican ticket. The American people have confidence in the triumph of truth in the field of general knowledge, even in such subjects as economics and politics, but seem to be fearful for the results of having the basic facts of their religion subjected to free and open discussion. Many are inclined to wonder why this is the case. Different reasons are assigned for this apparent mistrust and fear. Among the most common of these reasons are temperamental difference, prejudice and ignorance.

To many, temperamental difference is final and insurmountable. That is, to them, these "natural and inherited differences" are such fundamental factors in human behaviour that it would be futile for persons differently endowed, to attempt to study religious phenomena together. Should the Methodist, with his warmth of heart, be expected to find his greatest joy in educational fellowship with his cold-headed Congregational neighbor? Should it be hoped that temperaments so different as those found in the high church Episcopal and the democratic Baptist families could have much in common? To many it would seem that these differences are explicable only on the basis of inherent natural differences between the adherents of these communions. One appreciates form, beauty and impressive ritual, whereas the other appears to be more at home in the informal simple democratic service. It is argued, therefore, that nature itself is responsible for these apparently irreconcilable forms of religious expression.

The fallacy of this conclusion is made apparent when the basic assumption of temperamental oneness within a given denomination is exposed. The whole position assumes that the

individuals of one group are differently constituted by nature from those of other groups and that within denominational families is homogeneity. As a matter of fact heterogeneity of temperament is quite as rife within groups as between groups. This assumed uniformity could only be maintained by constant selections and choices, and thus by a continual realignment of individuals within groups. Though temperament played no small part in bringing into existence these different forms of religious expression as advocated by the various communions, it was possible because of the fewness of kindred spirits who voluntarily joined themselves into a group through organization and creed to express in the best possible way, their own religious spirit and genius. Once the organization was formed, enthusiastic promoters and missionaries, through zeal and persuasion, gained other adherents. Children were born into the homes, and new generations joined the organization, thus bringing divers natural temperaments within the group, for nothing is better established than the fact that children may differ in temperament fundamentally from the parent. In the great majority of cases, membership in particular churches is due to accident, either of birth or of environment, rather than to deliberate choice, based on temperamental difference.

Prejudice is another assigned barrier to cooperative efforts in the field of religious instruction. Heated controversies on doctrine, vested interests and fields of effort have forgotten unpleasant memories which in many quarters, have been studiously cherished, consequently wherever the interest of one group touches the interest of another group, suspicion and prejudice appear.

Religious prejudice is in most cases the daughter of ignorance and the sister of bigotry. Bigotry and intolerance in the other fellow is despicable. Of course, these "relics of more primitive developments," can only survive anachronistically in a denomination less advanced and enlightened than one's own. His Satanic Majesty has most generously bestowed all these evils upon other less favored groups, leaving one's own church free of all such antediluvian impedimenta, thanks to the rewarding love of God to his own peculiar people, whom he hath especially called to guard the faith once for all delivered to the

Saints and whom he hath further appointed to bring the light of broad Christian love and toleration to the more benighted denominations.

Perhaps the basic barrier in the way of a cooperative program of religious education at the universities, is the lack of sympathy and knowledge. People do not generally know what is actually being done and how far developments in this line have made progress. Nor have we put ourselves enough in the other fellow's place to be in a position to view the situation as intelligently as we should. A broad acquaintance with churches, their ultimate goal and genius, their peculiar contribution to society and the way they have been blessed in the sacrificial efforts, in spite of their shortcomings, would create an appreciation of them. A warm acquaintance with some of their choicest souls would result in supplanting suspicion with confidence, prejudice with trust and jealousy with love. No church is producing all the saints, no one is converting all the sinners, no one is evangelizing the whole world, no one is helping all the needy, no one enjoys the stamp of divine approval to the exclusion of all others; in other words, no one holds priority rights to God's attention and favor. No communion has done or experienced all these things nor is it very probably a guardian of the whole truth, but there is on the other hand no communion which is not actively helping to do and to experience all these things as well as to make its contribution in guarding the whole truth.

In the great field of human betterment these communions are essentially one. They are Comrades in the service of mankind, and sons in the worship of God. Yet on every hand we are acting as if ignorant of this basic fact. On the great broad lines, which after all is practical and potential Christianity, we have been co-operating, through other agencies to be sure, but none the less real.

The time is here when we should seriously attempt to usher in a period of appreciation and good will between denominations. Actual head and heart knowledge will accomplish wonders. When church members become sufficiently Christian to seek earnestly for the good in other communions, co-operation will be their inevitable *modus operandi*.

This transformation can be effected in the educational field,

as perhaps nowhere else. Particularly well do the subjects in religious education lend themselves to the accomplishment of this result. The path is becoming better defined each succeeding year. The advent of historic and scientific method makes more clear the main line of advance in the labyrinth of diverging and converging trails. Truth knows but one path and has no sectarian proclivities. Science plays havoc with strictly denominational interpretation in its insistence upon following the lead of fact. This means greater and greater limitation of the studies yielding exclusively to denominational teaching and to the enlargement of the field which can be presented and interpreted as well by members of one communion as of another. The scientific and strictly denominational interpretation of facts are apt to advance in inverse ratio to each other.

More and more lines of cleavage are appearing between "liberal and conservative schools." These lines cut squarely across all denominations. They affect not only the nature of the teaching, but the subject matter as well. While dividing the field, they define, and thus because of cutting across all by forming them into two great groups, greatly enlarge the sphere of co-operation. The chief object of concern today to both great camps is the point of view. This question having been answered very little interest is manifested in discovering the denominational leanings of a given teacher or author. Not only are text and reference books selected because of their point of view, rather than because of denominational origin, but even schools are being chosen on this criterion. For example: the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and the School of Religious Education of Boston draw liberal-minded students from a wide range of denominations; whereas, Princeton Theological Seminary and Moody Bible Institute attract students more conservatively inclined from just as wide a range of communions. The mistrust is more between schools of thought within denominations than between denominations as wholes. Denominational cooperation in the sphere of religious instruction, therefore, will be centered in two groups of kindred spirits in the various denominations. This having been determined, the further solution of the problems revolves about the two foci of subjects and teachers.

What subjects can be taught advantageously to classes com-

posed of students from different communions? Such subjects will lie very naturally outside of the range of peculiar denominational interests. It would seem that there would be no serious controversy in the Old Testament field. We know no such thing as Methodist Old Testament History, Baptist Old Testament Theology, Congregational Old Testament Introduction, Presbyterian Palestinian Geography or Lutheran Archeology, nor are there any serious denominational distinctions in New Testament Introduction and New Testament History. There are no sectarian findings on how to teach Greek or Hebrew, nor have the various communions developed different histories of the Christian Church, at least, as far as the period of the Reformation. In the fields of the philosophy of religion, the psychology of religion and the history of religion, there is no denominational criterion. Nor have any denominational lines of cleavage been detected in the fields of social science and of philanthropy. Religious education, even by denominational groups, cannot be properly appreciated unless the general field is covered, both as regards method and material. Assuming a given point of view, no denominational differences as such appear in the above named subjects. There is here then just as good a field for cooperative effort when scientifically taught as is to be found in geology, psychology and biology. The traditional and scientific points of view in reference to the last named group of subjects is just as irreconcilable as they are in the Biblical field.

A fundamental point, however, with all groups is the character and ability of the teacher. Has he a warm heart and a real religious experience; is he prepared for his position and can he handle his subject; does he inspire his students to higher thinking and living; these are vital considerations. Granting the teacher has these qualifications, his denominational relations will prove no barrier to his efficiency in instructing those of other labels.

The church forces can never gain and hold the respect of great numbers of thoughtful students and of members of the faculty until they can show by example that they can meet on the fair open field of science in the quest for truth. Until they can do this they will continue to be dubbed dogmatists and bigots by many and thus lose to their support large numbers of the most

thoughtful of their rightful supporters. Dogmatism, as such, is so loathed in the university that it is nothing short of fatal for the church to give to the student during perhaps the four most formative years of his life the impression that it is dogmatic and bigoted.

A comprehensive view of the field reveals the fact that much has already been accomplished in the way of cooperation in the field in question. General trust and confidence is growing up between individuals of different groups within the two great schools of thought. A given denominational college or seminary today may and often does have as many or more students from homes of other faiths than of its own. General recognition of the position of others is well illustrated at the State or Provincial University of Toronto, where a liberal number of credit hours is granted in the broad field of religious knowledge. These subjects may be taken in the affiliated college of the student's own denomination, whether Catholic or Protestant.

A closer type of cooperation is in practice at Montreal, where the Theological faculties of the different denominational colleges have organized themselves into a single great Theological faculty to teach the various subjects to students of all groups indiscriminately, except those subjects of strictly denominational character. These more sectarian titles are being taught to students by professors of their own churches, in their own respective institutions. They thus study together as a great common denomination the vast body of Christian truth and leave to each denominational faculty the responsibility of teaching its own students what they should know about the genius and tenets of their own communion.

This is exactly what a union school of religion at an American State university might well aspire to do, for no single denomination can afford to maintain such a wealth of teaching ability. The Toronto plan may not be feasible in our country because each denomination already has all the seminaries it can support and cannot build up at all the state universities, schools of such high grade and extent as would be required. The Montreal plan in simplified form seems not only feasible and practicable, but apparently the best and perhaps the only one which can meet the situation. Here denominational representation on the com-

mon faculty would be limited to the needs of the churches concerned. The maximum cooperation, specialization and confidence would be secured in this way at the minimum expense and suspicion.

There are other examples of interdenominational cooperation in this field among seminaries and training schools of the United States. Among the most conspicuous of these are two in New York City: the Union Theological Seminary and the Biblical Seminary in New York. Numerous other examples of various kinds could be cited, but these will suffice to point out the fact that interdenominational cooperation in this field not only exists at the present time but is succeeding admirably.

The psychological effect upon the student of interdenominational credit courses is difficult to estimate. By the student, values are determined largely in credit hours. Subjects worthy of his time and attention are counted toward his degree. Those failing to receive this recognition are tabooed, shunned and considered to be of little value. Universities which do not grant credit for high grade work, done in the field of religious knowledge, while not intentionally doing so, do nevertheless undermine the respect the student has for religion. At Toronto and McGill the study of religion because of its broad treatment enjoys the same honorable mention as other subjects of the curriculum. It is given its proper place among the scholastic pursuits because it is not represented by a conglomeration of competing sects, but by a unified organism of Christian cooperators. With religion thus commanding the respect of students and faculty, recruiting and training for Christian leadership is greatly facilitated.

With the growth of the state university so far surpassing that of the denominational college, religious educators are beginning to take stock of the situation and to inquire what can be done in behalf of the students' religious instruction in these great centers. Upon inquiry it has been learned that the presidents of the universities are as favorable as expediency will allow them to be toward any broad-gauged interdenominational program that will safeguard and serve the interests of all. They have in some places, in their desire to meet the need, even granted credit for work done by single communions.

If such concessions can be made to separate groups, the

broader interdenominational program will naturally present not only a much simpler problem for the administration but also a better psychological effect both upon student, faculty and general public. Respect and confidence increase in the ratio of groups represented in the cooperative effort. The administration of the University is assured of the minimum of objections from those not interested as well as of higher academic standards.

Some months ago a brief questionnaire sent to the religious workers in the universities of the United States, showed that there was an almost universal recognition of need of interdenominational credit courses in the field of religious education. This insistent demand is born out of the growing conviction that the educational approach is after all the fundamental one, and that it can be most effective when undertaken in a broad non-sectarian fashion.

Nothing can atone for fatal undermining evil psychological influences. They are usually determinative and final. No system of pastoral care, however well planned and conducted, can compensate for these terrific losses. Unless a positive line of teaching and influence be afforded the student and unless his thinking and attitude of mind be set right, the evangelistic and social programs will have little redemptive power. As Professor Ross, of Union, said: "The Kingdom will not come so much by convulsion as by education." Perhaps we can even more appropriately say that in these intellectual centers, abiding inspiration for higher living will come, not so much by exhortation as by information. The student shuns exhortation, but seeks information. Though He is open to this path of approach, but few denominations there be who find it. Did the churches appreciate the seriousness of the situation they would seek an immediate solution. The time is here when we should call a general disarmament conference to seek ways and means of relieving ourselves of the crushing load of competitive denominational armament and thus guarantee a lasting peace functioning through not only a League of Nations, but also a League of Denominations. Cooperation in the field of religious education in our universities is imperative for self preservation.